

# Half Circle



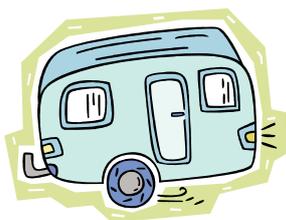
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**AT THE RAP:** **Barrie Taylor** – oncology treatment  
**Wally Magalas** – oncology treatment

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**THE LONG TAN MEMORIAL, VIETNAM** Dave Sabben, PL COMD 12 PL D Coy 6RAR, August 1966, reports: I am advised that the landowners of the rubber plantation at Long Tan determined that the trees had suffered damage resulting from recent cyclones, and that they would remain stunted and undersized and thus under-productive, and so needed to be replaced. The plan is to plant new trees in the next month. It will be five or six years before they even start to resemble the plantation which hosted the battle of Long Tan. Pity about the timing, with the 50th anniversary in Aug 2016 bound to draw a significant crowd, but the plantation is, after all, a working plantation and needs to remain profitable. We can expect some site restrictions around the Cross in the next few years including the ANZAC Days and Long Tan anniversary days as the trees will be young and susceptible to damage.



**TRAVELLING ABOUT:** Dave and Beth Wilkins, after 32 years in leafy Killara, have relocated to Pyrmont, in inner Sydney. We understand that they are very happy in their new surroundings and we wish them well in their new lifestyle.

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**9PL REUNION  
PHILLIP ISLAND, VIC  
MARCH 2014**

The latest 9PL (Roger's Raiders) reunion has been held in Phillip Island (Vic), and was organised by Phil Greenhalgh. Roger Lambert (PL Comd 1969/70) and his wife Rhonda were unable to attend, however a message from Roger to his men was delivered by Phil. Space does not permit us to re-print the address in full, but he mentioned the 45 years since we went to Vietnam, the subsequent years of 9PL reunions, the role and bond of the infantryman (irrespective of rank), the discomforts that were suffered, our pre-Vietnam training, and the men of the platoon – those who worked hard and played hard; those who donated part of their pay after having been caught just being Aussie diggers, the characters – Harry Kallergis, Reg Smith, and Eddie Moon, just to name a few.

Roger also spoke of the dedication and support of the wives, children and families of his diggers, and of how proud they should be of them – their sacrifices are largely unsung. He spoke of the time that his men (and others of C Coy) strung him up by his feet into the rafters of the "Mushroom Club" for daring to shut the boozier on time, the lack of distinction between ARA and National Servicemen serving in Vietnam in a very unpopular conflict. Mention was also made that the digger in Vietnam endured longer periods of conflict than any other Australian soldier. Roger also spoke about leadership, and how it was a two-way street – mutual trust between the officers of the Company, and their men.

He also mentioned that his men were not all good barracks soldiers, even in the very primitive conditions of Nui Dat, and how at Christmas 1969, an American jeep and trailer with a half ton of beer aboard appeared in the C Coy lines. Nobody knew anything about it (especially 9PL). Somehow none of the brass even acknowledged its presence (and that typifies the outstanding leadership that we had!) Roger once again thanked his men for their service.

**Phil Greenhalgh reports on the reunion:**

Melbourne (or more pertinently – Phillip Island) turned on a perfect week, weather wise, for the re union. Warm balmy days, cooler nights. Great for sightseeing during the day and convivial boozing at night. A total of 35 attendees arrived, they being:

Pam and Eric Hamlin  
Pat and Ben Oram  
Max and Lorraine Postle  
Bryan and Arleen Schafer  
Steve and Margaret Porter  
Don and Gail Teichelman  
Owen and Lisa Schmidt  
Geoff and Liz Storm  
Ross and Liz Bourke  
Wally Magalas

Paul and Maureen McQueen  
Jessie and Jock Phillips  
Phil and Marion Greenhalgh  
Terry and Loraine Major  
Fred and Wendy Dwyer and Lori  
Morgan  
Phil and Julie Winney  
Dennis Manhood  
Greg and Di Blair

Tony and Kaye Samuel drove to within 80 kilometres of the Island and had to return to NSW to attend to a family emergency that suddenly arose. They were bitterly disappointed but had no other option than to turn around. Terry Fitzgerald also had to cancel out as his mother suddenly passed away and Terry had the obvious obligation of attending to funeral arrangements etc. Our sincere condolences go to Fitzy.

Tuesday evening was the official dinner event. Apologies for being unable to attend came from Jack Lake, Roger Lambert, Col Summerfield, Terry Fitzgerald and Tony Samuel. A moment of reflection and remembrance was recognized to those platoon members who have recently passed and our thoughts were with Sharon Swan and Wanda Moon. A report from Roger Lambert was read, and is summarised above.

Wednesday was partially spent at the Vietnam Veterans Museum where a plaque honouring members who never made it back, was unveiled. The Vietnam Veterans Museum Ladies Auxiliary prepared and delivered a great lunch.

Thursday was golf day for those who participate in chasing small white spheres across a gigantic green sphere. The perpetual Major / Dwyer grudge bet was won by Freddy Dwyer although a protest was lodged as it seems that Fred was seen pulling a buggy whilst perched on the back of an electric golf cart. Apparently a no-no in the golfing circles. The world's best caddy, Bennie Oram, complete with the latest of golf ensembles, i.e. flip flop thongs, called it quits after about 11 holes and he and his golfing partner, Ecce Hamlin, (along with quite a few others) retired to the nineteenth for refreshments. Granted that the ambient outdoor temp. was close to 30 Celsius. Whilst the men wasted energy on the course, a group of the wives drove back up to Melbourne for some serious retail therapy. One wonders who enjoyed themselves the most. Final dinner on Thursday night was at the appropriately named Fat Seagull restaurant, highlight of the evening was Oram attempting suicide by gashing his thumb on a window closing device. Fortunately, trained nurse Liz Storm was able to stem the copious blood flow and Bennie lived to tell the tale (if he is game). It was decided at this dinner that the next reunion would be held in **Vietnam**. Bluey Schafer was elected (was there a vote asks Blue??) co-ordinator of this event. Just goes to show what a bit of rank rewards you with.

The reunion was deemed a fantastic get together, the accommodation, the choice of venue, the weather and absolutely the combined association of all the guys and their wives all came together to produce indelible memories.



Rear (L to R): Owen Schmidt, Geoff Storm, Ron (Fred) Dwyer, Dennis Manhood, Bill (Jock) Phillips, Steve Porter, Max Postle, Greg Blair, Ben Oram, Phil Winney. Front (L to R) Paul McQueen, Bryan (Blue) Schafer, Wally Magalas, Eric Hamlin, Terry Major, Phil Greenhalgh, Ross Bourke, Don Teichelman



Geoff Storm, Don Teichelman, Dennis Manhood, Wally Magalas and Owen Schmidt



Don Teichelman and Jock Phillips



The 9 Platoon, C Company 5RAR plaque at the Vietnam Veterans' Museum, Phillip Island, Victoria



**In Sydney and want to hit the little white ball?** Then head for the Georges River Golf Course, Henry Lawson Drive Georges Hall. Geoff Grimish and his team will make you most welcome. Phone (02) 9724 1615.

***Ed's note: We have now opted for a larger type, so reading Half Circle may be a bit easier for you old blokes!***



Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – [donharrod@bigpond.com](mailto:donharrod@bigpond.com), 0418 423 313, 02 6842 4913, with help from Barrie Taylor, Bob Hooper, Dave Sabben (ex D Coy 6RAR), John Humphries (Trackers), Geoff Ford, Roger Lambert, Don Teichelman, and Phil Greenhalgh